

**Background
Information**
from
**Congressman
Joe Pitts**



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TRAFFICKING IN PERSONS

Upcoming conference to address this "form of modern day slavery"

Congressman Joe Pitts will host his annual human rights conference on Saturday, September 18 from 8:30 am to 12:00 pm at New Life Assembly of God on Old Philadelphia Pike in Lancaster.

The conference is open to the public by RSVP to the Congressman's Washington, DC office. It is also open to the media.

Trafficking in persons has been described as 21st century slavery, because it involves the buying, selling, and transporting of human beings for profit. These men, women, and, increasingly, children are used as laborers, prostitutes, and worse. This weekend's conference is intended to highlight the issue and offer residents of the 16th District an opportunity to combat this new slavery.

Below, you will find background from the State Department on this important human rights issue and insight on how concerned citizens can get involved.

■ WHAT IS HUMAN TRAFFICKING?

Trafficking in persons is modern-day slavery, involving victims who are forced, defrauded or coerced into labor or sexual exploitation. Annually, about 600,000 to 800,000 people -- mostly women and children -- are trafficked across national borders which does not count millions trafficked within their own countries.

People are snared into trafficking by many means. In some cases, physical force is used. In other cases, false promises are made regarding job opportunities or marriages in foreign countries to entrap victims.

■ WHAT IMPACT DOES HUMAN TRAFFICKING HAVE ON THE WORLD?

Human trafficking is a multi-dimensional threat: it deprives people of their rights and freedoms, it is a global health risk, and it is deeply a part of organized crime.

Human trafficking has a devastating impact on individual victims, who often suffer physical and emotional abuse, rape, threats against self and family, passport theft, and even death. But the impact of human trafficking goes beyond individual victims; it undermines the safety and security of all nations it touches.

■ WHAT IS THE UNITED STATES DOING TO STOP TRAFFICKING?

Trafficking impacts many nations, including the United States. That's why the U.S. Government has taken a number of serious and significant actions to combat trafficking occurring at home. A few examples of American efforts include:

- Congress passed legislation so Americans who sexually prey on children abroad can be prosecuted and sentenced to as many as 30 years in prison.
- The Department of Justice has focused on increasing the number of trafficking victims rescued and the number of prosecutions and convictions of traffickers.
- The Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) is certifying trafficking victims so they may qualify for the same assistance available to refugees. HHS is also running a major public awareness campaign to alert victims in the U.S. that help is available through the **hotline number 888.3737.888**.
- The Department of Defense has implemented a zero-tolerance stand against any actions by Defense personnel that contribute to human trafficking and is instituting a service-wide mandatory training program.
- The Departments of Labor and Homeland Security, USAID, and other government agencies are executing action plans to combat human trafficking.

■ WHAT IS THE U.S. DOING TO HELP OTHER COUNTRIES?

Because human trafficking is transnational in nature, partnerships between countries are critical to win the fight against modern-day slavery. The U.S. is reaching out to other countries in a number of important ways:

- In a speech to the United Nations General Assembly, President Bush raised the issue of human trafficking and asked leaders of the world to work together to end it.
- The State Department is working extensively with governments on action plans for prevention, protection of victims, and prosecution.
- Congress last year strengthened anti-trafficking legislation and provided more than \$70 million in funding worldwide for efforts to end slavery. The U.S. is providing money around the world for:
 - Rehabilitation and work training centers for victims
 - Special housing shelters for victims
 - Law enforcement training and legal reform assistance
 - Information and awareness campaigns
 - Voluntary repatriation for displaced victims
 - Training for immigration officials, medical personnel and social workers
 - Combating sex tourism

- Rescuing victims from slave-like situations

■ WHAT NEEDS TO BE DONE?

When dealing with an issue of this importance and urgency, there is much to be done. The U.S. is asking governments to immediately take action to step up their anti-trafficking efforts:

There is a critical need for increased rescues of trafficking victims, prosecutions of traffickers, and aftercare for victims.

People freed from slavery must be treated as victims of crime, not criminals.

The demand for modern-day slaves must be stopped. This is not a victimless or harmless crime, and the public should be informed of the risks involved with it.

What are the Trafficking Victims Protection Act and the *Trafficking in Persons Report*?

Congress passed the Trafficking Victims Protection Act (TVPA) in 2000 and strengthened it in 2003. This law provides tools for the U.S. to combat trafficking in persons, both domestically and abroad.

One of the key components of the law is the creation of the *Trafficking in Persons Report*. The Department of State produces this annual report assessing government response in each country with a significant number of victims of severe forms of trafficking in persons. Countries in the annual report are rated in tiers, based on government efforts to combat trafficking.

■ WHAT DO THE TIERS OF THE *TRAFFICKING IN PERSONS REPORT* MEAN?

Tier 1: Countries that fully comply with the act's minimum standards for the elimination of trafficking.

Tier 2: Countries that do not fully comply with the minimum standards but are making significant efforts to bring themselves into compliance.

Tier 2 Watch List: Countries on Tier 2 requiring special scrutiny because of a high or significantly increasing number of victims; failure to provide evidence of increasing efforts to combat trafficking in persons; or an assessment as Tier 2 based on commitments to take action over the next year.

Tier 3: Countries that neither satisfy the minimum standards nor demonstrate a significant effort to come into compliance. Countries in this tier are subject to potential non-humanitarian and non-trade sanctions.

■ HOW CAN I HELP END MODERN-DAY SLAVERY?

Human trafficking takes on many forms in the 21st century with people becoming trapped into lives of servitude and misery through varied avenues and methods. Foreigners who enter the United States legally or illegally may have to pay their "smugglers" or middle-men exorbitant fees. Some people arrive believing they'll have a legitimate job as a housekeeper or nanny and end up as domestic slaves unable to leave their traffickers' homes. Others are completely tricked and end up in forced, commercial, sexual exploitation. Some men believe

they'll earn money working on a farm, but find themselves working to pay off the inflated "debt" from "travel costs" -- working months and years on end while the traffickers pocket their earnings.

Whatever the situation, as citizens we can all make a difference in helping end and eradicate modern-day slavery. Our recommendations include the following:

✓ **INCREASE PUBLIC AWARENESS ABOUT MODERN-DAY SLAVERY**

Human trafficking could be discussed in an open forum at your local church, college, school, synagogue, or civic group. Many Americans are still unaware of how widespread the problem is and how it may even be happening in their own backyards. The more people learn about this human rights abuse, the more "eyes and ears" are available to help report suspected cases and prevent further abuses.

✓ **SUPPORT GROUPS THAT WORK TO END HUMAN TRAFFICKING**

In the U.S. and abroad, dozens of local, state, international, and multi-national organizations are working to combat modern-day slavery. Research these groups and learn about their efforts. Find out how you can help, either by volunteering or supporting their efforts financially.

✓ **ASK YOUR STATE REPRESENTATIVES AND SENATORS TO PASS ANTI-TRAFFICKING IN PERSONS LAWS**

While the U.S. has strong federal anti-trafficking in persons legislation, it is helpful for states to pass laws of their own to further educate and involve local law enforcement officials. Several states have these kinds of laws, and a model state law is available at <http://www.usdoj.gov/trafficking.htm> (under "Resources").

✓ **UNDERSTAND THE LINK BETWEEN HUMAN TRAFFICKING AND COMMERCIAL, SEXUAL EXPLOITATION**

We estimate that of the 600,000-800,000 people trafficked across country borders every year, almost 70% are forced into the commercial sex industry. Half of all victims are children. Many are forced to work in brothels, illegitimate massage parlors, as "escorts," or in pornography. When people support such industries they are fueling the demand for commercial sexual services that fuel the demand for trafficking victims.

✓ **REPORT SUSPECTED HUMAN TRAFFICKING CASES**

If you believe someone you know may be a trafficking victim, contact the Department of Health and Human Services' Human Trafficking Hotline at (888) 373-7888. Information on how to recognize a potential human trafficking scenario and/or victim is available in the fact sheet "How Can I Recognize Trafficking Victims" at: <http://www.state.gov/g/tip/rls/fs/34563.htm>.

■ **HOW CAN I RECOGNIZE TRAFFICKING VICTIMS?**

Because trafficking in persons is usually an "underground" crime, it can be difficult for law-enforcement personnel, the public, or service providers to readily identify a trafficking victim and/or a trafficking scenario. There have been cases of victims escaping and reporting the

situation to the police. However, many are physically unable to leave their work sites without an escort and are not free to contact family, friends, or members of the public.

There are many factors that can tip off the general public, law enforcement personnel, or service organizations that a trafficking scenario may be taking place locally.

Sex Trafficking

Victims of sex trafficking are often found in the streets or working in establishments that offer commercial sex acts, i.e. brothels, strip clubs, pornography production houses. Such establishments may operate under the guise of:

- Massage parlors;
- Escort services;
- Adult bookstores;
- Modeling studios;
- Street corner prostitutes;
- Brothels; and
- Bars/strip clubs.

Labor Trafficking

People forced into indentured servitude can be found in:

- Sweatshops (where abusive labor standards are present);
- Commercial agricultural situations (fields, processing plants, canneries);
- Domestic situations (maids, nannies);
- Construction sites (particularly if public access is denied); and
- Restaurant and custodial work.

■ HOW DO PEOPLE GET TRAPPED INTO SEX OR LABOR TRAFFICKING?

No one signs up to become a slave. Traffickers frequently recruit victims through fraudulent advertisements promising legitimate jobs as hostesses, domestics, or work in the agricultural industry. Trafficking victims of all kinds come from rural, suburban, and urban settings.

There are tell-tale signs when commercial establishments are holding people against their will.

Visible Indicators May Include:

- Heavy security at the commercial establishment including barred windows, locked doors, isolated location, electronic surveillance. Women are never seen leaving the premises unless escorted.
- Victims live at the same premises as the brothel or work site or are driven between quarters and "work" by a guard. For labor trafficking, victims are often prohibited from leaving the work site, which may look like a guarded compound from the outside.

- Victims are kept under surveillance when taken to a doctor, hospital or clinic for treatment; trafficker may act as a translator.
- High foot traffic especially for brothels where there may be trafficked women indicated often by a stream of men arriving and leaving the premises.

Trafficking victims are kept in bondage through a combination of fear, intimidation, abuse, and psychological controls. While each victim will have a different experience, they share common threads that may signify a life of indentured servitude.

Trafficking victims live a life marked by abuse, betrayal of their basic human rights, and control under their trafficker. The following indicators in and of themselves may not be enough to meet the legal standard for trafficking, but they indicate that a victim is controlled by someone else and, accordingly, the situation should be further investigated.

■ WHAT IS THE PROFILE OF A TRAFFICKING VICTIM?

Most trafficking victims will not readily volunteer information about their status because of fear and abuse they've suffered at the hands of their trafficker. They may also be reluctant to come forward with information from despair, discouragement, and a sense that there are no viable options to escape their situation. Even if pressed, they may not identify themselves as someone held in bondage for fear of retribution to themselves or family members. However, there are indicators that often point to a person held in a slavery condition. They include:

Health Characteristics of a Trafficked Person. Trafficked individuals may be treated as disposable possessions without much attention given to their mental or physical health. Accordingly, some of the health problems that may be evident in a victim include:

- Malnutrition, dehydration or poor personal hygiene;
- Sexually transmitted diseases;
- Signs of rape or sexual abuse;
- Bruising, broken bones, or other signs of untreated medical problems;
- Critical illnesses including diabetes, cancer or heart disease; and
- Post-traumatic stress or psychological disorders.

Signs That a Person Is Being Held as a Slave. In addition to some of the obvious physical and mental indicators of trafficking, there are other signs that an individual is being controlled by someone else. Red flags should go up for police or aid workers who notice any of the following during an intake. The individual:

- Does not hold his/her own identity or travel documents;
- Suffers from verbal or psychological abuse designed to intimidate, degrade and frighten the individual;
- Has a trafficker or pimp who controls all the money, victim will have very little or no pocket money; and
- Is extremely nervous, especially if their "translator" (who may be their trafficker) is present during an intake.

Coupled with any of the above, another indicator that a person may be held against their will is if the individual is a foreigner, unable to speak the language in the country where they reside or work.

While there is no set formula to determine whether or not a person has been trafficked, the following list of questions can serve as a guideline to determine if trafficking elements are present in a given situation.

■ HOW TO REPORT A SUSPECTED TRAFFICKING CASE

If you suspect that a person is a trafficking victim, there are a number of ways to report the suspected case and to help the individual receive appropriate care and counseling.

In the United States:

Call the Health and Human Services-sponsored, **toll-free line 888-3737-888 24 hours/day**. This hotline will help you determine if you have encountered victims of human trafficking, will identify local resources available in your community to help victims, and will help you coordinate with local social service organizations.

Contact your state's Attorney General's victim/witness coordinator.

Contact your local FBI.

Additional information on reporting suspected cases within the U.S. can be accessed through: <http://www.usdoj.gov/trafficking.htm>.

For countries outside the United States:

Call the national or local trafficking hotline, if applicable.

If the suspected victim is foreign, contact their embassy.

If local law enforcement is reliable, contact local police.

■ MORE RESOURCES

Congressman Pitts' trafficking site: <http://www.house.gov/pitts/trafficking.htm>

The Protection Project (Johns Hopkins University):
<http://www.protectionproject.org/main1.htm>

Department of Justice: <http://www.usdoj.gov/trafficking.htm>

Department of Health and Human Services: <http://www2.acf.hhs.gov/trafficking/index.html>